WELCOME

This newsletter starts out with summarizing two key publications on judicialization, venue shopping, global regulatory harmonization and European trade policy. In addition, ACIM published several academic articles among others on the impact of European integration on the Belgian federation. We also prepared a report on the opportunities of the Lisbon Treaty for the Flemish Region.

ACIM does not remain within the fences of its own academic niche, but regularly ventures out into other fields. This resulted in published chapters and an article on political communication, political trust and right-wing populism. Moreover, ACIM was present in the press, informed the broader public on the role of interest groups play during WTO Ministerial Conferences and on the regulation of lobbying in the EU.

Enjoy reading our newsletter!

TO ENFORCE OR NOT TO ENFORCE? JUDICIALIZATION, VENUE SHOPPING AND GLOBAL REGULATORY HARMONIZATION

Dirk De Bièvre and Arlo Poletti, together with Lars Thomann, published an article in Regulation and Governance tackling the seemingly chaotic phenomenon of international venue choice. Using the policy field of intellectual property protection as a field of application, they show how the degree of judicialization of a particular international institution or organization matters for state (and private actor) preferences over where, and where not, to locate global regulation. Defining judicialization as delegation of adjudication to an independent third party and the enforcement through multilaterally authorized sanctions, they show that 1) in a scenario of downward harmonization, actors preferring weak regulatory intellectual property rights standards strive for venues with low degrees of judicialization, whereas those favoring stringent intellectual property rights protection prefer highly judicialized venues, and 2) in a scenario of upward harmonization, institutional preferences tip. Whereas the first expectation and finding is pretty straightforward, the second is counter-intuitive and important, as the battle of where to locate regulation is then strangely reversed with regard to earlier preferences of the same actors. By applying this theoretical lens to international venue choice, the article also provides clarifying insight in the content and form of the regulation of plant genetic resources and intellectual property rights for medicines in the global economy.

The ungated article is available here.

THE POLITICAL SCIENCE OF EUROPEAN TRADE POLICY: A LITERATURE REVIEW

In this literature review, published in Comparative European Politics, Arlo Poletti and Dirk De Bièvre provide a helicopter view of political science literature on EU trade policy over the last two decades. They sketch the transition from a largely sui generis and empirical literature, to a comparative and theory-guided type of political science. They also sketch promising avenues for future research on trade policy making, highlighting for instance potential research on the impact of consensus versus majoritarian political systems on trade policy outcomes and interest group lobbying, or the comparative application of veto player theory to trade policymaking. In short, a useful introduction to, and overview of the political science of European trade policy. The ungated article is available here.
HOW EUROPE SHAPES THE NATURE OF THE BELGIAN FEDERATION. DIFFERENTIATED IMPACT TRIGGERS BOTH COOPERATION AND DECENTRALIZATION

In a recently published paper in *Regional and Federal Politics*, Jan Beyers and Peter Bursens examine how European integration has shaped the nature of the Belgian federal polity. The paper focuses on two, seemingly opposite, trends. While the institutional embeddedness of Belgium as an EU member state results in domestic centralizing tendencies and co-operative political practices, economic integration stimulates political pressures for regional autonomy, contributing to further divergence and hollowing out of the federal level. The legal and institutional connection of Belgium with the European system of governance encourages cooperation between the federal and the regional levels. However, Europe also stimulates the hollowing out of the central state and the further regionalization of Belgium as the creation of European supranational policies and institutions de-monopolizes the production of public goods. Europe has become an important point of reference for regional political elites. The precise impact of European integration on the Belgian federation is difficult to predict as much of this will be mediated by the salience of the EU in domestic politics and by the willingness and capacity of domestic actors to make strategically use of the institutional opportunities offered by the EU.

The ungated article is available here

REPORT ON OPPORTUNITIES AND LIMITATIONS OF THE TREATY OF LISBON(TOL) FOR REGIONS

First, national parliaments are drawn into direct control of the EU, most notably through the ex-ante subsidiarity test. For its competences the Flemish parliament is perceived as a chamber of the national parliament and thus acquired the same new possibilities as national parliaments in the ToL. A second opportunity concerns the explicit recognition in the Treaties of the regional level. Although the practical consequences of this recognition remain doubtful, it anchors regions in the Treaties. A third opportunity is greater access to the Court of Justice of the European Union (CoJ). All legal persons have gained easier access to the CoJ due to elimination of the individual concern condition in case of regulatory acts. Regions have more access to the CoJ through the Committee of the Regions (CoR). The CoR can bring an annulment action when its prerogatives were not respected. It can also bring an annulment action when the subsidiarity principle was not respected in areas where it needs to be consulted. A region can depending on the internal legal order bring an annulment action through its national government. When there is an agreement between regions, communities and federal government on the mixed character of the conflict Flanders can bring an annulment action through the federal government. There are also some constraints resulting from the Treaty of Lisbon. Regions who have legislative competences in sports and tourism might be confronted with attempts by the Commission (and Member States) to harmonize legislation in these domains. A second constraint for regional authorities is the introduction of delegated acts as a different form of comitology acts. The Commission doesn’t need to consult nor needs to seek the approval of a committee of national experts. Even though the Council and the EP can withdraw the delegation or block the delegated act, the member states, but also Flanders, partially lose oversight powers. A third constraint is the increasing hierarchy of the Council formations, implying that Council formations where Flanders is never present (e.g. ECOFIN) have gained influence.

Overall it appears that the opportunities for regions remain largely symbolic, while the constraints are quite substantive. The report was written for the Policy Research Centre on ‘Foreign affairs, International entrepreneurship and development cooperation of the Flemish government.’

Executive summary (English)

*Full report* (Dutch)
ON FRONT DOORS, BACKDOORS AND REVOLVING DOORS: LOBBYING THE EU

Following ‘Dalligate’ Niels Morsink (PhD student) published an article in Samenleving & Politiek on how reforms in lobbying regulation in the EU can contribute to more transparency. On 12 November 2012 Commissioner John Dalli resigned, because an acquaintance had proposed a money-for-influence deal to a Swedish tobacco company. However at the time it was unclear whether this really happened or whether the tobacco lobby was trying to slow poaching a civil servant and his list of contacts grants undue access and possibly influence.’

First, due to a lack in transparency it is impossible to assess whether the Commission receives reliable and sound information. An obligated registration could remedy this lack of transparency. Currently, there is merely voluntary registration in the transparency register.

Second, another question concerns the revolving door, where civil servants working for the Commission become lobbyists and then civil servants again. For instance one tobacco lobbyist followed this common trajectory. This practice risks being conducive to conflicts of interest. Moreover, whereas access to the Commission is most often based on consistently providing quality information or representing an EU-wide interest, poaching a civil servant and his list of contacts grants undue access and possibly influence. A measure mitigating this dynamic could be a two year cooling off period after resigning from the Commission during which a civil servant is not allowed to work as a lobbyist.

One of the top lobbyists in Brussels mentioned in 2010 during a class at Harvard that we are merely in the stone age of lobbying in the EU. More information to digest and professionalization of lobbyists create a higher demand for lobbyists. While the lobbyists evolve, it is time their regulation also moved out of the stone age.

PROF. DR. MICHAEL KEATING

On 8th of January the distinguished Prof. Dr. Keating was invited by ACIM for a lunch seminar and presentation of his new book Rescaling the European State. The rise of the meso. Professor Keating has been studying regions and regionalism for almost 40 years. His superb expertise allows him to situate current development in a broader perspective. He pointed to the rising importance of the regional level as government (as opposed to governance) and territory, which didn’t disappear in a much trumpeted time-space warp. The lunch seminar focused on whether interest groups were following this trend in Germany, France, Italy, UK and Belgium. The answer was that it fluctuates between sorts of interest groups. For instance, whereas big business has acknowledged the regional level, it is reluctant to engage with it for fear of being drawn into social and ecological concerns. On the other hand small business is much more engaged because it is much more dependent on the public goods (infrastructure) the regions provide. Moreover regions seek to stimulate social dialogue on the regional level in order to create legitimacy.
ACIM incursions in other research fields

HOW A NEW ISSUE BECOMES AN OWNED ISSUE?

ACIM researcher Iskander De Bruycker and professor Stefaan Walgrave (M2P) have a new publication in the International Journal of Public Opinion Research (IJPOR). In their research note they examine why Flemish voters link issues to political parties, and the role of the news media in this process. They focus particularly on the financial crisis issue that emerged as new on the Flemish public agenda in 2008.

Issue ownership is a theory typically employed to explain voting behavior. Voters link issues to parties and the party that is linked to the most salient issue in election times will win the public’s support. But where does issue ownership come from?

Apart from stable and long-lasting types of issue ownership based on parties’ positions on cleavages, the link between parties and issues can be affected by more volatile and wave-ring media coverage connecting parties to issues.

De Bruycker and Walgrave argue this applies especially to newly emerging issues for which the association with a particular party is absent or not yet deeply engrained.

Drawing on the Flemish debate regarding the 2008-2009 financial crisis, De Bruycker and Walgrave show that media coverage of the crisis focused in particular on the Flemish parties in the federal government. These same parties were considered by the Flemish public as the key issue owners of the financial crisis. Elaborate regression analysis shows that voters who were more exposed to media coverage linked the crisis significantly more to the government parties than voters who were less exposed. For older, well-established issues, media coverage did not affect issue ownership. This suggest media coverage is particularly key in establishing the ownership over new issues.

The research note can be viewed via the link below and will be published in one of the forthcoming issues of the journal.

“Voters who were more exposed to media coverage linked the financial crisis more to the government parties”

Find the full article here

Radical right parties: their voters and their electoral competitors

Together with Wouter van den Brug, Meindert Fennema and Sarah L. de Lange (all University of Amsterdam) Inger Baller published a book chapter on the support for radical right parties. Their analysis shows that in general policy preferences explain this support better than attitudes towards democracy or socio-demographic characteristics. However, the differences between countries in explanatory power of these three models are large. Furthermore, they found that the patterns of party competition are complex. Radical right parties most often compete with conserva-

tives or Christian democrats, but in some eastern European countries also with social democrats.


Trust/distrust between political elites in consociational federations

Niels Morsink (PhD student) and Dave Sinardet published a book chapter in a book on distrust and trust in multinational democracies, putting Canada in a comparative perspective. The chapter argues that despite consociational mechanisms (parity in government, veto power for each political elite) trust is still necessary for policymaking, because whereas consociational mechanisms make sure that political elites cannot harm each other, trust is needed. Moreover they argue that consociational mecha-

nisms can result in a vicious cycle of lower trust resulting in consociational mechanisms, which in turn are the cause of lower trust until blockage is the result.

WHAT TO DO IN DOHA?

For the research project on global advocacy, Marcel Hanegraaff, Bert Fraussen, and Tom Donas attended last year the Doha UN Climate Conference in Qatar. There, they interviewed almost 300 interest group representatives, country negotiators and other delegates.

One interesting finding is that while the number of interest groups attending the conferences has steadily increased over the past years, almost 40 per cent of the respondents feel that the possibility for interest groups to have an impact on the negotiations has actually decreased. One important reason for this gradual decline is that, according to many respondents, the negotiations at the conference more than ever seem to take place behind closed doors. Moreover, interest group representatives indicate that the willingness of country delegates to interact with non-state actors is also slowly diminishing. This is substantiated by interviews with delegates who indeed indicate that the conferences might have become a bit too big to satisfy the needs of all actors involved.

The situations seems to be most problematic for interest representatives from low-income countries as they indicate to be the least optimistic about their propensity to have an impact on the negotiations. That is, they find it hard to get in contact with relevant stakeholders at the conference, let alone have an actual impact on the negotiations. It is therefore of no surprise that within this group of interest group representatives, most respondents indicate that they hesitate to attend any more conferences in the future.

Finally, most respondents were not particularly optimistic about the progress of the climate negotiations. Almost 60 per cent of the respondents expects modest or no progress in the upcoming years, while only 15 per cent expects to see some more significant steps to be taken. While this is not surprising given the lack of development we have seen regarding climate negotiations in the past, it does render the question why so many interest groups keep attending these conferences each year.
SUMMER SCHOOL ON INTEREST GROUPS IN BARCELONA

The 4th ECPR Summer School on Interest Group Politics will take place at the Institut Barcelona d’Estudis Internacionals (IBEI) during July 3 – 10, 2013. The Summer School is the first in a second series of three successive summer schools to be organized from 2013-2015. Each summer school is designed to offer a mix of intensive introductory courses into the field and more advanced courses on specific topics within the study of interest group politics. The 2013 summer school will focus on interest groups and agenda setting in multilevel governance systems. The goal is to provide graduate students firm knowledge about how interest organizations mobilize to foster policy change in a tremendously complex and multilayered political environment. In doing so, the course pays special attention on how major changes on the patterns of governance at the global, European, national and sub-national level have transformed mobilization and framing strategies of interest organizations across time, across policy subsystems, policy venues, and countries. The direction and coordination of the summer school will be provided by Laura Chaqués-Bonafont (Universitat de Barcelona and IBEI).

The Summer School is aimed at Post-graduate students (Masters and PhD programs) in comparative politics, public policy, democracy and regulation willing to do research on interest groups. The maximum number of participants is 25.

Don’t miss this opportunity to learn from the best!

Find more information and a link to the programme [here](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28/05</td>
<td>Wim Van Aken - Voting in the Council of the EU (1995-2010): Institutional Change and Legislative Stability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meerminne (M 105), St-Jacobstraat 2, Antwerpen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04/06</td>
<td>Iskander de Bruyckere (or Jan Beyers) – followed by a social activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meerminne (M 106), St-Jacobstraat 2, Antwerpen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18/06</td>
<td>Frederic Maes – The impact of Europe 2020 on Flemish governance: a research design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meerminne (M 106), St-Jacobstraat 2, Antwerpen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
More specifically, I am currently teaching an introductory course to International Relations at the Department of Political Science of LUISS and I just concluded a course in International Public Policy for students of the Master of International Public Affairs at SOG.

Arlo Poletti in Rome.

Since March this year I have taken up a new position as Junior Assistant Professor at the School of Government (SOG) of the University LUISS Guido Carli in Rome. While I remain fully affiliated as a FWO post-doctoral researcher to ACIM, I have the opportunity to complement my research and teaching background with this experience in a new academic environment. SOG is a relatively new institution aimed at offering training for high-level public and private officials to handle political and government decision-making processes. Besides conducting research in my fields of interest – political economy of trade policy, judicial politics in the WTO and global regulatory harmonization – I have engaged in teaching at both under-graduate level and post-graduate levels.

Laura Baroni in Antwerp

I came to ACIM from the University of Salzburg for a four-month research stay in March 2013. The ACIM group has been very welcoming and instantly made me feel like part of the team. My PhD project examines the influence of interest groups in the European Parliament – in particular, the effect of information supply and demand on interest groups’ ability to attain their preferences - and is embedded in the INTEREURO project. This stay has been a great opportunity to work more closely with the Antwerp team of INTEREURO. I have received substantial and very useful feedback on my research design and had many inspiring chats with my new colleagues. Being here has also allowed me to make headway on my empirical work, as I have been conducting interviews with Members of the European Parliament in Brussels. I have really enjoyed my stay in this beautiful and friendly city and it has been a pleasure working with the ACIM team. It will be hard to leave at the end of June!

Hans Diels starts working at the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Hans worked for ACIM as a teaching assistant and PhD student. He has been working on his PhD project on the role of transnational business actors in Transatlantic policy coordination in which he studies how transnational firms may facilitate regulatory policy coordination between states by setting the agenda, providing shared information and identifying policy solutions. He will finish his PhD in 2014.

At the Ministry he will be responsible for the representation of Belgium to the EU’s Trade Policy Committee (Services & Investment). In this function he will deal with the negotiations of free trade agreements with (among others) the United States and Japan.

Sarah Arras joins the ACIM team

Sarah Arras is working since October 2012 as a researcher for the INTEREURO project.